

A general guide to the building consent process



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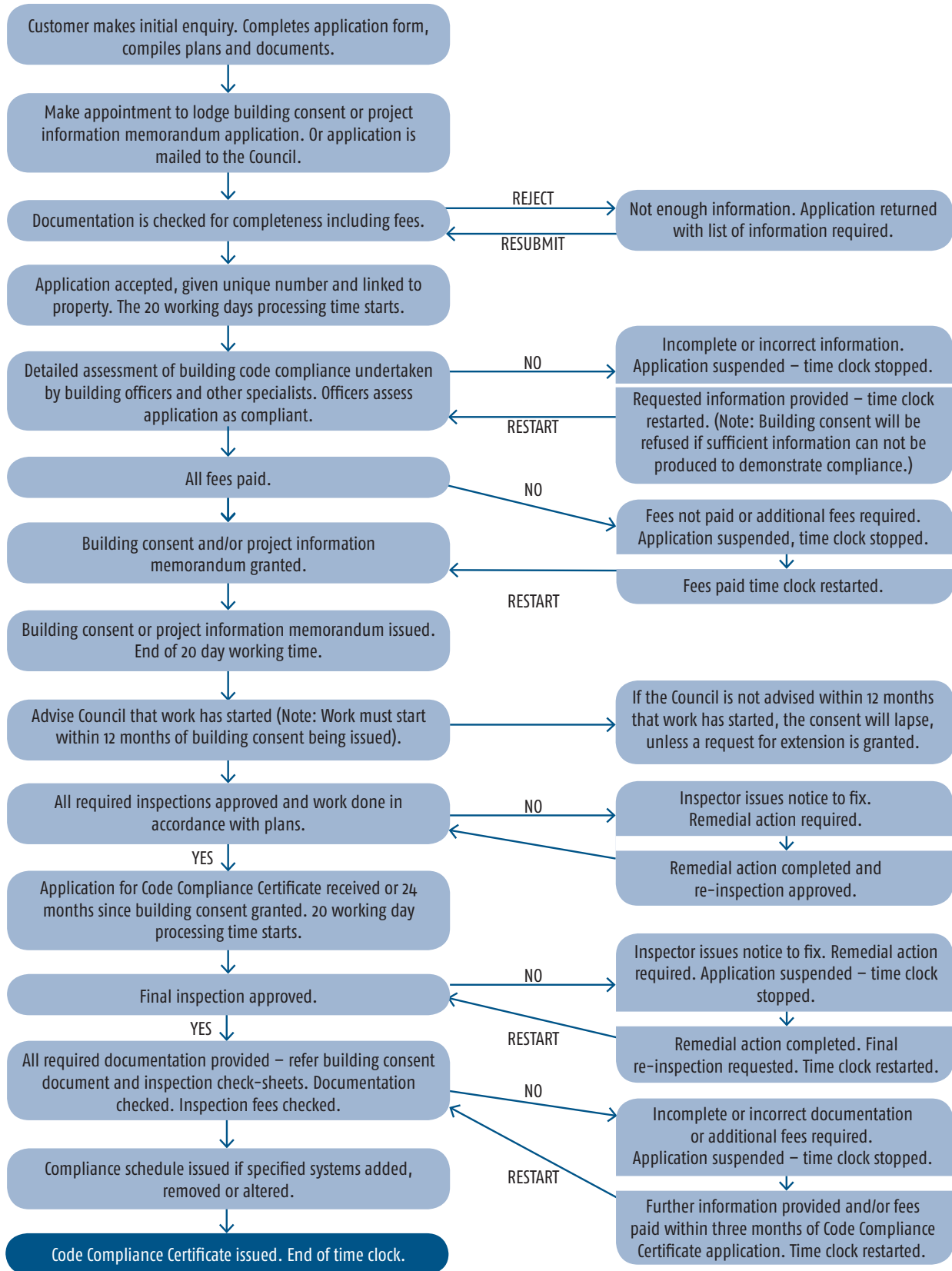
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WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Wellington

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1. FLOWCHART SHOWING THE BUILDING CONSENT PROCESS



2. BUILDING CONSENTS AND LICENSING SERVICES

Building Consents and Licensing Services (BCLS) is a business unit within Wellington City Council. We carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Building Act.

Our staff are trained professionals with backgrounds covering a range of building disciplines, including architecture, engineering, plumbing, and construction. Using the information that you provide in your application, our staff will be able to issue you with a building consent, or advise you of any additional information needed in order to approve the application.

We are committed to providing top-quality customer service and aim to help you obtain your consent as fast as possible, while also ensuring that your building project meets all legislative and building code requirements.

3. WHAT IS A BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION?

Most types of building work require a building consent to ensure compliance with the Building Act 2004 and with the New Zealand Building Code.

The purpose of these legislative requirements is to ensure that New Zealand buildings are soundly built and meet acceptable standards with regard to safety, the needs of the building users and environmental sustainability.

When considering a building consent application we must consider aspects of the property that could have some effect on the way the work is carried out. This information is contained in a Project Information Memorandum (PIM). A PIM details any information the Council has that may affect your proposed project. You can choose to apply for a PIM before lodging a building consent application. A PIM will be issued with your building consent if one was not previously issued.

The building consent must be obtained before the work starts.

Only work listed under Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 may be done without first obtaining a building consent, however, the work must still comply with the Building Code. Examples of work that do not require a building consent are:

- a patio or deck at ground level
- garden trellis less than two metres high
- installing kitchen cupboards
- a small garden pond less than 400mm in depth
- home maintenance, for example replacing spouting or a piece of weatherboard.

4. THE BUILDING CONSENT PROCESS

4.1 Enquiring about making an application

The Council's website www.Wellington.govt.nz has information about applying for building consents and other approvals. From the Building Services page you can access application forms, checksheets that list the plans and documentation that need to be supplied with your application and other information.

Application packs can also be collected from Building Consents and Licensing Services reception area on Level 1, 101 Wakefield St, Wellington or requested by phone on 801 4311.

You can also find useful information about applying for building consent and download publications from the Department of Building and Housing website – www.dbh.govt.nz/building-index. The Department has a number of useful publications for homeowners including 'Guide to applying for a building consent (simple residential buildings)' and the 'Building Act and You'.

The Consumerbuild website www.consumerbuild.org.nz also has lots of helpful information – especially for homeowners or people who are new to the building industry.



If you are not familiar with building plans and establishing compliance with the Building Code you may need to engage a design professional (for example an architect) to supply the required drawings and information, and to apply for a building consent on your behalf. For complex projects we recommend that you seek professional advice.

4.2 Checking your application

Once you have completed the application form you, or your designer, will need to check that you are providing all the required documentation and information. The check-sheet explains the documentation and information that must be submitted for your project. The left-hand column of the check-sheet should be used to indicate documentation that is being supplied. The completed check-sheet must be included with your application.



4.3 Lodging the application

Once you have completed the application form and checked that you have provided all the information required you may lodge your application by one of the following methods.

- Mail the application to Building Consents and Licensing Service, Wellington City Council, P O Box 2199, Wellington. We aim to check mail applications within two days of receipt.
- Drop the application at our reception desk on level 1, 101 Wakefield St, Wellington. These applications will be handled in the same way as mail applications.
- Phone us on 801 4311 to make an appointment with an officer to lodge your application.

Your application will be checked by an officer before being accepted to ensure all the required information is supplied. Applications will not be accepted if any of the information is missing. Mail applications will be returned by mail if not accepted. This initial check is in regard to content of the application only. A more detailed check of the information supplied is done during processing.

Fees will be assessed when you lodge the consent and will include payment for the estimated number of inspections required for your project. The fee schedule is available on our website will give an indication of the amount payable or you can contact us on 801 4311 for a fee estimate as an application will not be accepted without this payment.

If the value of your application is over \$20,000 your fees will include levies which we are required to collect on behalf of the Department of Building and Housing (DHB) and the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ).

4.4 Entering the application in our system

Once we accept your application it will be given a unique service request (SR) number and entered into our processing system. You should quote this number whenever you write to or contact the Council about your building consent application. Your application will be linked to the records for the property.

It takes up to 20 working days to process an application. The "clock" starts when the consent is accepted and entered into our computer system.

4.5 Processing the application for compliance with the Building Act, Building Code, District Plan and/or other permissions required

Our professional officers will evaluate the various aspects of your building consent application to ensure it meets the requirements of the Building Act and the Building Code.

Your application may be assessed by a number of officers with specific skills and knowledge. These may include building, plumbing and drainage, structural, resource management and others.

There is a requirement for some applications to be sent to the Design Review Unit, NZ Fire Services Commission (DRU). Using the DRU checksheet (Form 196) from our website www.Wellington.govt.nz/services/builders/pdfs/checksheets/consents-for-fire-service.pdf, will help you to determine if your application needs to be referred. There will be additional fees to pay if your application needs to be sent to the DRU.

If we find your application does not contain all the necessary or correct details to allow us to make a proper evaluation of the proposed work, an officer will contact you for the information needed and your application will be temporarily suspended. The “clock” stops when the information is requested and restarts when the requested information is all received.

The Building Act requires us to process your application within 20 working days from the time your application is accepted. However, if your application is suspended because of a lack of supporting information, the period of suspension is not counted as part of the 20 days. Therefore it is important that you fully and accurately complete the application form and attach all information at the outset to avoid the possibility of delays during the process.

In some instances you may not be able to supply sufficient information to show that your proposed building work will meet the requirements of the Building Act 2004 and the Building Code. If so you may have to amend your proposal or the Council may be unable to issue your building consent.

4.6 Checking resource consent requirements and other permissions

The work for which you are seeking consent is checked for other required permissions for example Resource Management Act or District Plan requirements.

A land use consent is required where all or part of the proposed building activity does not fully comply with the relevant rules in the District Plan. A subdivision consent is required to legally divide land or buildings for separate ownership, such as new lots or sections.

In either of these cases, if you have not already applied for and been granted a resource consent, we will advise that you need to do so. Resource consent must be obtained before the building work can start.

The District Plan rules are available on the Council website www.Wellington.govt.nz, or from Building Consents and

Licensing Services, Wellington City Council Service Centres or the Wellington City Council Libraries.

We also check for compliance with the Council's bylaws and other legislation such as vehicle access, earthworks, water reticulation, public drainage and, in the case of commercial premises, areas such as health, trade waste, building warrant of fitness and backflow prevention.

4.7 Additional fees

Occasionally, as we work on your application and seek further information, we may find that there are additional areas to investigate (for example the need for an earthworks assessment, a compliance schedule or an assessment by an environmental health officer) necessitating additional fees. If this is the case, we will invoice you for payment before the building consent is issued. This may include additional charges incurred if the consent was sent to the Design Review Unit.

4.8 Reasons for delays to your application

There are a number of possible causes for delays to your application:

- non-payment of application fees
- an incomplete application form
- shortage of initial information
- the need to supply amended information for your application.

We can't guarantee that there will be no delays, but the chance of this occurring is significantly lessened if you thoroughly check your application before it is submitted. If there are any areas that you are unsure about, we recommend that you seek input from a professional.

4.9 Approving the application

Once your application has been assessed as conforming to all the required criteria, and all necessary fees paid, it will be granted and a building consent and/or project information memorandum issued.



4.10 What happens then?

Once your building consent is issued and you have obtained any other approvals required, such as a resource consent, then you may commence work on your building project. Please notify us on (04) 801 4311 when you are ready to start work.

It is very important that you (and your contractors) read the building consent documentation to ensure you are clear about the requirements. It will contain a list of inspections required to be made by Council officers during the building process, and a list of producer statements required from specialists (typically engineering disciplines). The identified specialists will be required to provide documentation of the inspections they undertake in support of their producer statement.

Your building consent will include an information sheet titled "On The Building Site" which contains useful information about matters which you need to comply with while you are undertaking your building project.

Work must start on your project within 12 months after the date the consent was issued. We will send you a letter before 12 months reminding you that work must be started and asking if you intend to proceed with the work, if we have not been called for inspections before this time. You may decide that you will not do the work, in which case the consent will lapse, or you may apply for an extension of time to start the work. An extension of time to start work may be granted in some circumstances after an officer has reviewed the building consent file.

If we do not hear from you within the stated time, or an extension of time to start is refused, the consent will be lapsed meaning a new consent would have to be applied for and issued before any work could be carried out.



4.11 Inspections

At various stages during construction you will need to arrange for building officers to inspect what has been done in order to ensure that your building work complies with the conditions of the building consent. The inspection requirements will be listed in your building consent. You can book your inspection anytime by calling (04) 801 3813. You should forward plan your building work and book well in advance to ensure that you can get an inspection when you need it to avoid delays on site. Inspections can not be guaranteed for last minute bookings. You will be given a morning or afternoon appointment. You will need to supply the following information when booking an inspection:

- Address for inspection
- Type of inspection required
- SR number (this is the unique number given to each building consent)
- Name of person who will be on site
- Contact number for this person.

Re-inspections may be required if the officer is not satisfied that the work meets the requirement of the building consent and the Building Code. These may incur additional charges if inspections exceed those estimated when you lodged your building consent application.

In addition to the inspections by Council officers, inspections may be required by specialists, including structural, geotechnical and fire engineers. You will need to liaise directly with your specialist about the inspections he/she will need to make. Your specialist may not be able to give you the required producer statement if you have failed to arrange for inspections at the appropriate times.

If inspections have been missed, contact us to discuss possible alternative evidence you can provide to show that the work is code compliant. A subsequent inspection may not be able to be undertaken until it has been verified that the work already in place complies with the building consent.

The work must be carried out in accordance with your approved building consent. If you wish to change some aspect of the project you must obtain an amendment to the building consent before the work is carried out. The process for obtaining an amendment is the same as obtaining the original consent. It is very important that at the time of the inspection the building consent documents accurately reflect what has actually been built.

If the work has not been done in accordance with the building consent the inspector may issue a Notice to Fix or a site instruction stating what is required to be done.

4.12 Types of inspection

The following are the types of inspections that may be required depending on the type of building work:

Building inspections

- Site; location of the building on site (a Surveyor's report or visible boundary markers)
- Foundation; before placing any concrete for foundation walls or footings
- Piles before placing any concrete for pile foundations (timber or concrete)
- Pre-Slab; before placing any concrete for concrete floor slabs and any integral footings
- Retaining Wall; before back-filling against any wall or covering any tanking
- Sub Floor; before covering any sub-floor framing
- Pre-Wrap; prior to fitting building wrap to framing
- Pre-Clad; upon completion of the building wrap with flashings/tapes installed and before fitting any external cladding
- Brick; brick work at half height
- Weathertight; before applying any coatings to the external cladding system
- Pre-Line; before fitting internal linings or installing wet area membranes, airseals fitted internally around joinery, bracing connections complete
- Pre-Line; acoustic; before fitting internal linings where specialist vibrationally isolated connections or in frame insulation is specified
- Post-Line; bracing; post line bracing while fixings are still visible
- Post-Line; fire; where fire-rated walls are included, certification from the fire design engineer (PS4) or sufficient inspections to verify correct installation of specified linings and protection of penetrations
- Post-Line; wet area membranes; inspection of installed wet area membranes before installation of finish surfaces such as tiles
- Post-Line; acoustic; where sound-rated walls are included, certification from the acoustic design engineer (PS4) or sufficient inspections to verify correct



installation of specified linings and attenuation of penetrations

- Final; final inspection on completion of all building work following a formal application for a Code Compliance Certificate (form supplied with approved consent documentation).

Plumbing Inspections

- Drainage; testing any drainage work prior to back filling and before covering any field drains
- Pre-Slab; plumbing in/under the floor slab
- Pre-Line; plumbing systems before fitting any linings
- Final; final inspection on completion of work.

4.13 Sign off

When the work is complete you will need to formally apply for a Code Compliance Certificate on the form enclosed with your building consent. A Code Compliance Certificate means that the building work complies with the building code and with the building consent.

You may also need to arrange a time for a final inspection, if one has not already been carried out.



When you apply for Code Compliance Certificate you will need to give names and contact details for all the people involved in your project e.g. builders, plumbers, engineers, etc.

You may also be required to supply supporting documentation such as energy work certificates or a PS4 (engineers producer statement) before a Code Compliance Certificate can be issued. Your building consent lists the documentation required before Code Compliance Certificate can be issued and additional documentation may also be requested during inspections.

We may be unable to issue the Code Compliance Certificate if any of the required inspections have been missed or the required producer statements can not be provided. Without a CCC you may experience difficulties insuring your property or selling it in the future.

A review of the fees paid for inspections will be made when the Code Compliance Certificate has been approved for issue. Additional inspection fees will be charged if the inspection fee paid when the application was lodged is not enough to cover the inspection time actually used. The Code Compliance Certificate will not be issued if there are any unpaid fees.

If an application for Code Compliance Certificate has not been received before two years after the building consent was granted, the Council is obliged to undertake an inspection and decide whether or not to issue a Code Compliance Certificate.

If you apply for an extension of time to complete your building project an officer may grant an extension after reviewing the file.

In some circumstances we may refuse to issue a Code Compliance Certificate, for example, if an extension of time to complete is not granted or if the work is not complete or does not comply or if you fail to supply the required documentation.

A Compliance Schedule will be issued with the Code Compliance Certificate where the building has specified systems that have been added, removed or altered (including residential properties that are serviced by a cable car). Where the compliance schedule is new, a compliance schedule statement will also be issued. You must display this statement in the building.

The Building Act requires us to process your application for Code Compliance Certificate within 20 working days. The "clock" starts when we receive your application. As with building consent applications, the "clock" will stop if your application is suspended awaiting additional inspections, documentation or fees and will restart when the issue has been resolved.

5. OTHER INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS

5.1 Determinations

If you are not happy with or disagree with a decision we make either during the processing or inspecting of your building work you can request a determination from the Department of Building and Housing. You can find out more about applying for a determination on the Department's website www.dbh.govt.nz/determinations-about-determinations.

5.2 Certificates of Acceptance

A Certificate of Acceptance is a new tool in the Building Act 2004. It will provide some verification for a building owner or future building owners that part or all of certain building work carried out complies with the Building Code.

A Certificate of Acceptance can be issued where:

- Work that required building consent was carried out without first obtaining building consent.
- A private building consent authority (approved under the Building Act 2004) or a private building certifier

(approved under the Building Act 1991) is unable to issue a Code Compliance Certificate for work carried out under a building consent.

- A Code Compliance Certificate cannot be issued for work carried out to a building that is open to members of the public and the building consent was issued prior to 31 March 2005.

A Certificate of Acceptance can only be issued if the work complies with the Building Code at the time the application is made. (This differs from a Code Compliance Certificate which is issued if the work complies with the Building Code at the time the building consent was issued.)

When a Certificate of Acceptance is issued it will list the work the Council inspected.

You can find out more about applying for Certificate of Acceptance on our website www.Wellington.govt.nz. Your application will need to provide evidence of how the work complies with the Building Code, including those parts of the work that the Council cannot inspect.

5.3 Certificates for Public Use

A Certificate for Public Use is a new provision under the Building Act 2004. It is used to certify that premises or

parts of premises affected by building work are safe to be used by members of the public. A Certificate for Public Use can only be issued where a consent has been granted for building work but no Code Compliance Certificate has been issued yet. Certificates for Public Use do not relieve the owner of a building from the obligation to apply for a Code Compliance Certificate after all the building work has been carried out. Certificates for Public Use are not required for private homes.

5.4 Additional sources of information

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

- Department of Building and Housing
www.dbh.govt.nz
- ConsumerBuild
www.consumerbuild.org.nz
- Wellington City Council
www.Wellington.govt.nz
- Department of Internal Affairs
www.legislation.govt.nz

